

Periodical Publication. Europe, England
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SCRUTINY;

OR THE

Criticks criticis'd:

1087. c 32
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BEING AN

EXAMINATION

INTO THE

CENSORIAL MERITS

OF THE

Authors of the *Critical Review*:

Occasion'd by

Their extraordinary Account of a P O E M,
entitled

Epistles Philosophical and Moral:

A work whose moral Tendency is here impartially consider'd, and its Arguments illustrated and defended against the palpable Misrepresentations of those *candid* Criticks.

By the Editor of those Epistles.

Tho' we do not approve of the author's Philosophy, yet we will candidly own our Admiration of his Genius, both as a Poet and Metaphysician.

CRITICAL REVIEW.

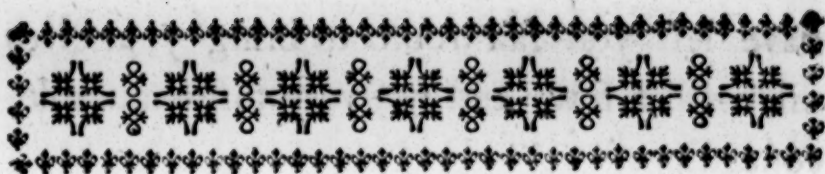
Fools may admire but Men of Sense approve.

POPE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. WILCOX, over-against the New Church in the Strand. 1759.





TO THE
 A U T H O R S
 OF THE
Critical Review.

Gentlemen Criticks.

AS the editor of *epistles philosophical* and *moral*, I have reason to think both myself and the author much aggriev'd, by your account of his work. In the just heat of resentment, therefore, I have drawn up the following remonstrance: wherein you will see the cause of complaint, and, at the same time, observe that, considering the nature of the offence given, I

have left you fair room to bring yourselves off, with a few, and not very dishonourable, concessions.

On mature reflection, I doubt not of your being convinc'd, of your having given judgment too lightly; and, as I have too much respect for your characters to wish you enemies, either to myself or the author, I hope you will think proper to retract those very harsh expressions, you have so inconsiderately let fall.

I am sensible, indeed, to retract assertions, so lately and so publickly made, is a task too mortifying to little minds, for me to expect it from such. I pay you, therefore, a compliment in requiring this, and hope you will prove deserving of it.

But, however this be, I must desire you not to evade the charge, here brought against you, by pitiful, verbal criticisms on my stile and manner. I have not kept this pamphlet, for revival, *nine years*; nor, in fact,

fact, nine hours. The publick will, I presume, make shift to understand me; and, therefore, if you have any impartiality at all, you will, at least, give your readers a fair specimen of what is here said, in the author's defence; and, if you can invalidate it, do. Should you, however, shuffle off, and do neither of these, the just resentment you have rais'd may not probably fall here. It is true, the author himself is a philosopher; and grave personages, like great bodies, move slowly: so that, before you have reason to expect correction from his own pen, you may flatter yourselves the occasion will be forgotten. It is otherwise, however, with me, who, as a kind of fatellite, may happen to make a number of revolutions before my *primary* makes one: I may, therefore, probably, prove another *Cæsar* to another *Brutus*, and meet you again at *Philippi*.

It were well, therefore, that you take honourable advice, and be cautious how you lay yourselves open for the future; lest I
should

should seize some other occasion of making your review the theatre of war.

Think not I am under a necessity to confine my scrutiny to a single performance. I may, perhaps, so rattle *occasionally* in your ears; and wage, on all sides, *bella, horrida bella!* that if your name were *legion*, or, you had all the hundred hands of *Briareus* himself, you might find enough to do, to keep your work from being mortally wounded.

I doubt not, indeed, that, to shew us you are not to be intimidated, you will affect, in your known, magisterial way, to despise so volatile a pen as mine; and that you will gravely tell us, it is not your business to enter into disputes, in defence of the characters you are pleas'd to give the works of any author. But before you excuse yourselves from doing what *is not* your business, let us have some reason to think you know, and do, what *is* your business, and your excuse will be admitted.

In

In the following sheets I have taken the liberty to remind you of your original plan ; which indeed, is a very good one, though you appear to have entirely forgot it.

We shall see, by your conduct in regard to this pamphlet, and the work which has prov'd the occasion of it, whether you have not, also, forgot a certain advertisement, often printed on the blue covers of your former reviews. And yet, on second thoughts, as your memory appears so very treacherous, it may not be improper to remind you of it here.

“ If we have in the prosecution of this
“ work commended too lavishly, or con-
“ demned too severely ; if we have omitted
“ beauties, and exaggerated blemishes ; if
“ we have afforded any reason to doubt our
“ taste or integrity ; we profess ourselves
“ open to conviction and reproof ; and
“ should any person take the trouble to de-
“ monstrate our errors and misconduct, we
“ will endeavour to improve by his censure,
“ and

“ and kifs the rod of correction with great
“ humility.”

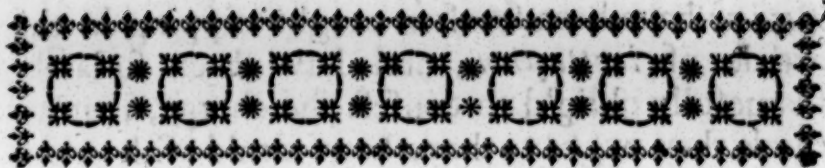
Now, gentlemen, if you would have the publick believe you meant what you said in this advertisement, there is reason to think you will give some instance of it on this occasion. And so I recommend this pamphlet, and the first article of No. 35. of your review, to your most serious consideration.

GENTLEMEN,

Your humble Servant,

The EDITOR of

Epistles philosophical and moral.



A
S C R U T I N Y,
O R T H E
C R I T I C K S C R I T I C I S ' D , & c .

WHILE the publick continues to be supplied with such a swarm of writings as issue monthly from the press, it is not to be doubted that our literary reviews will find readers; nor that, if carried on with sufficient candour and abilities in their respective authors, they might also prove of considerable Use. But how often have these authors been charg'd with giving, dogmatically, characters of books they have not read; at least, not with the necessary attention to enable them to form a proper judgment of such books. And, perhaps, it is with as much justice, they have also been charg'd with doing the like of books, which their utmost attention would not have capacitated them to form a competent judgment of at all. So very moderate are those abilities, which the publick have been taught to ascribe to

these

these formidable Criticks ! Those of the *Critical Review* have been so often caught tripping in the article of *inattention* ; and have been so lately shamefully oblig'd to confess the charge, that we think they ought to have been arm'd with more caution, than so soon to expose themselves again, and that so openly, as they have done in the first article of their last review.* For we will not attribute the many misconstructions they have there put on a work, the genius of whose author they professedly admire, to any other cause than their not having read, and properly digested, those tracts, against which they so loudly, and injuriously, exclaim.

That they do not, frequently, understand the performance, they take upon them so severely to censure, must be evident to all those who do ; or they would not, surely, dare to accuse the author of malevolence and impiety ; much less of *inhumanity*, in the very article where he censures our narrow and selfish notions of virtue, and recommends the most extensive, the most universal system of benevolence and true humanity.

But to consider the critical strictures of these gentlemen in some order. They set out with imputing, to the author of the epistles, that pitiful and mean artifice of *mock-modesty* ; in that he professes no great ambition to be thought a *poet*. That there is so little real modesty to be found among authors, may indeed be thought one reason for their suspecting all pretences of this kind, of affectation. By their own account, however, this appears in *our* author more than a pre-

* No. 35, for December 1758.

pretence : for, certain it is, and certain it is he must have known it too; that he has pitch'd upon the worst subject in the world, for the display of poetical talents. Nay does it not plainly appear from those numerous grammatical peccadillos, and inelegancies of stile, which these criticks have discover'd, that the author's negligence, as to his poetical character, was very great? For surely they will not pretend to suppose their admir'd *poet* and *metaphysician* so poor a grammarian, as, out of real ignorance, to be guilty of mistaking persons and making false concords. This they will hardly do: and, as for the rest, we believe we may venture to assure them that, when the author lays immediate claim to the honour of the *bays*, he will chuse a more promising subject.

In the present case, he avows his pretensions to the character of a *philosopher*; for which reason, for I can see no other, the *Criticks*, out of a spirit of contradiction, or perhaps to shew they know best, insist upon't he shall not be a *philosopher*; but a *poet*. And, in order seemingly to persuade him to be contented in the station they please to assign him, they name *Lucretius*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, and *Voltaire*; to hint, I suppose, that he will be found in no very contemptible company; tho' he should, to oblige them, give up his pretensions to *philosophy*.

After this, nevertheless, the *criticks* fall upon the author's *poetry*; and, indeed justly and very sagaciously, observe, that he would have written much more at ease in *prose*. But, had this been the case, as he could have then laid no claim to

the title of * poet, and these *criticks* seem unwilling to allow him any other, he might have whistled for any character he would have got of them at all.

As to the false grammar, however, and obscurities charg'd on the work by these learned *criticks*; certain it is, they have hit upon some slips and oversights of that kind, which, though the reader may be ready enough to excuse, and to impute to the author's being confin'd to rhyme, yet we do not take that to be a valid excuse; nor do we believe the author would himself think it so; but conceive he would plead guilty, and rely on the mercy of the court, rather than seek to elude justice by so pitiful an evasion. It is, yet, as has been times out of number observ'd, much easier to find faults than to mend them. Our *criticks* give us a plain proof of this, even in their own strictures: in which they show themselves as ignorant of our language, or as careless as even the author himself. And in this they are surely much less excusable: for, tho' the *poet* may be pardon'd, on account of *his being involv'd in the labyrinth of argument, and confin'd in the fetters of rhyme*, the *criticks* can claim no such indulgence; nor can their inattention to the subject-matter itself be at all excus'd, nor themselves defended; unless, indeed, by their borrowing the target of Dr. Br—n, call'd *the rapidity of composition*; if it be not in truth already hack'd to

* At least, not according to the opinion of *Longinus*, tho' we have known the title of poet given by modern *criticks* to writers in whose works were to be found neither *metre* nor common sense.

to pieces, The two lines first quoted by the criticks, as false grammar, are these *

Presuming thou, in honour to the muse,
Indulgent, once her labours *may* peruse.

may is said to be used here for *mayst*: but I do not know whether, if we suppose the word *that* to be understood after the participle *presuming*, the verb *may* may not be us'd with propriety, in the subjunctive mood, in the same manner as it is us'd in *French*. This, however, we will not defend, tho' we could produce some authorities, if it were worth while. If we may judge, however, by the stile of our *criticks*, they do not seem to reflect that we have any subjunctive mood in our language: or surely they would not write so constantly as they do, among other inaccuracies of the like kind, *if it is*, and *if it was*: but, as the more eligible for profess'd criticks, *if it be*, and *if it were*. The author is charg'd with using the word *sophister* for *sophist*; which, say these judicious *criticks*, is a barbarism of the same kind as *linguister* and *musicianer*. Now it appears to us, gentle reader, that a *sophist* and *sophister* differ as *poet* and *poetaster*; and that the author does not, nor can any body else with propriety, use the one for the other. If the *criticks* are not too self-sufficient to look into *Johnson's Dict. Fol. Ed.* they will find that learned lexicographer of

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our

* We here beg pardon for detaining the reader with any reply to such trivial criticisms. They may, however, have their use, and serve to shew how much we should be oblig'd to any writer, who should have judgment and authority enough to give us a good syntax, of the English language,

our opinion ; and see the authorities for the use of this word. At the same time, they may try to find any such words there as *linguister* and *musicianer* : and, if they cannot, we hope they will allow the author to use the word *sophister*. For, let them despise authorities as they please, we cannot help telling them, in the words of *Horace*, that the rule of language is *custom* ;

Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.

Again, in these lines of our author,

To real merit ne'er allied
The pedant's, or the parson's, pride.

the verb *is*, say the criticks, is requir'd to make them grammar ; but considering them as relating to the foregoing words, and part of the same sentence, may not the participle *being* do as well ? and may not even that be left out, by the same licence as we make use of the ablative absolute, in *latin* ? We are afraid, if we deny our poets this licence, we must deny a very great part of the finest poems, in our language, to be written according to the rules of grammar. But not to tire the reader too much with trifles, we shall give only one proof more of the grammatical learning of these *criticks*. They say that the verb *are* is absolutely necessary to render the following lines grammatical.

If plac'd thy faith on points alone,
Whose truth demonstratively known,

In which of these lines now would the *criticks*
have

have the word *are* plac'd? if the reader can gueſs to any purpoſe it is more than we can. According to their ideas of grammatical nicety, we preſume, the lines would ſtand thus.

If thy faith *be* plac'd on points alone,
Whose truth *is* demonſtratively known.

It appears now that the verb, or verbs, wanting muſt be either *be* or *is* or both; but not *are*: for, be the criticks ever ſo reſolute in the uſe of the indicative for the ſubjunctive mood, it could not be grammatical to uſe any verb, in the *firſt* line, but *is*: and, as to the *ſecond* line, it muſt be the ſame: for, ſurely it is *points* *whoſe truth* *is*, and not *ARE*, *known*. Further, if the verb *be* may be left out with propriety in the firſt line, why may not *is* be omitted in the ſecond? But, be this as it will, the verb *are* would be ungrammatical in either the one or the other: nay, we remember to have known ſchool-boys heartily flogg'd for ſcribbling, on their ſlates, ſo falſe a concord as theſe magiſterial criticks have avow'd publickly in print.*

But, to leave the diſagreeable taſk of verbal criticiſm to *word-catchers that live on ſyllables*, we ſhall juſt conſider an obſcurity and ambiguity or two, as they are call'd, and proceed to matters of conſequence.

As

* This is a palpable oversight in our criticks. It is too evident here, what number the verb should be of, for them to mistake through any thing but inattention. We could, however, point out ſome examples that might occur, where a nice grammarian would be at a loſs, even in ſo ſimple a point. So imperfect, even yet, is the grammar of the Engliſh language.

As to the stricture on the beginning of the second Epistle, in these lines;

Nor to the fount of Hippocrene,
 Nor groves of laurel ever green,
 Nor where the wanton graces stray,
 With flow'r's is strown the muse's way.
 Lorenzo, no, I more rejoice
 At reason's bold and manly voice, &c.

we understand the author means his own particular muse, of which he speaks on the very occasion of writing the work in hand: in which sense we see no obscurity at all; nor discover the least shadow of *proposition* and *inference* in the case. So that the *ergo* of our *criticks* appears to us as ill-adapted as the *argal* of their brother logician, the * grave-digger in *Hamlet*: the author meaning to say no more than that, *his muse does not tread the usual flow'ry paths of poetry; he delighting more in the voice of reason, and the rugged ways of philosophy.*

These lines also, among others, are said to be unintelligible.

Hence, mortal man, must ever-be
 Thy author, God, unknown to thee.

We must confess we cannot think what ails the apprehension of our criticks: they seem to be much duller than we ever thought them before.

Yet

* Goodman *Delver* says, here lies the point; if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches. It is to act, to do and to perform; *Argal*, she drown'd herself wittingly.

Yet we would advise the poet (for the sake of such extreme dullness, since it is to be found among a set of people, for whom he must be supposed to write) to transpose the above words in his next edition, if it be not too late ; and to let them stand thus,

Hence, mortal man, unknown to thee
Thy author, God, must ever be.

We hope this would please our hypercritical *criticks*; and we will venture to assert, in our own praise and begging the author's pardon, that it is as *neat* an emendation, and as much in the spirit of the *original* as any the famous Dr. *Bentley* ever made in his life: not but that, were the doctor living, this would be saying a bold word, let us tell ye. But this by the way.

Again, the *Criticks* quote a passage from the Epistles thus,

*Convinc'd, doth Polydore, with me,
That God's indefinite degree,
Yet argue, &c.*

This, say they, is also unintelligible. Indeed, and so it is. For tho' this passage was easy to be understood in the work itself ; yet in the review it is obscure and dark enough. Those who have seen both will, perhaps, think the *criticks* are in love with obscurity, and therefore, what they did not find sufficiently unintelligible they were resolved to make so. The word *degree*, gentle reader, should be *agree*; and so it is printed in
all

all the copies we ever saw of the work itself. We have heard of criticks attributing errors of the press to authors: but never before saw so palpable a misquotation thus drawn up, in battle array, against any.

In fact, to hazard our opinion freely, we really imagine the case to have been this: the *Criticks*, to whose sagacious review our author's work had the fortune to be subjected, either had not time or inclination to peruse it with sufficient attention, to enable themselves to give the publick a compleat view of his design; or to make themselves so far masters of the subject, as to give any satisfactory reason for approving what they approve, or condemning what they condemn. But, as it was necessary for them to *say* something, so, to give their readers a notion they had *done* something too, and that they did not pretend to criticise on books without subjecting them to a previous and severe examination, they just gave themselves the trouble to pick out a few inaccuracies of stile; to make a parade of philological learning with, and impose on the reader. This, it must be confess'd, was a much easier task than that of entering into the merits of the metaphysical, or moral, disquisitions of an author, they found so much difficulty to comprehend. This being done, also; for the rest, we imagine they had recourse to the *arguments* of the epistles, from which they pick'd out so much of the author's principles, as to find they should have the *majority* on their side, in disapproving great part of what was advanc'd; and which (from their imperfect notion of the whole, and inattention to what other writers had said on the same subject)

subject) they concluded to be very *new* and very *strange*!

As to the quotations ; they appear evidently to have been made at random ; being neither judiciously calculated, as instances of the philosophical fallacies the criticks condemn ; nor to give any just idea of that beauty in the author's poetry ; in which, as they pretend, lies the chief merit of the work. Such, therefore, on the whole, appears to have been the conduct of the critical reviewers, in regard to a performance, to which, as the prejudices of mankind wear off, some future age may probably do that justice, we do not conceive, will be done it in this.

Such a course, however, appears to us very different from that, one should expect, and indeed the publick have a right to expect, an impartial and candid reviewer would take, in giving us an account of a work, written by a man of *confess'd* genius, and on the most important points of *philosophy* and *morals*.

But, perhaps, to have considered our author's performance in a proper manner was too great a task. We believe verily it was : for though our heart may scruple to approve, as well as that of the criticks, some few dogmas to be met with in the epistles, yet we have not head enough to refute them, nor in fact the courage, from the plausibility with which they are advanc'd, to deny them. This incapacity in private readers, however, has nothing to do with *profess'd* criticks and *censors*. If these gentlemen would have their suffrage

frage respected, in regard to any book above the common, superficial and frippery writings of the age; trifling *adventures*, impertinent *estimates* and motley *contemplations*.—If they would be considered, we say, as affording us any criterion of *literature*, *taste* and *good sense*, let us find them, when occasion offers (which being so seldom would, we think, be no great hardship on them) capable at least, of understanding their author, and of giving some reason for what they approve or condemn.

It is easy, say these *judicial* criticks, we do not here mean to say *judicious*) for a man of speculation to “spin philosophical cobwebs of a new fashion: systems not more strong, nor more durable, than the labours of *Arachne*; which the next metaphysical broom will sweep away.” Very poetically and prettily said, we must confess! But however true it may be in general, we may venture to say the metaphysical broom of the reviewers will never greatly disturb the cobwebs of our author. For, were they indeed no more, they seem to be plac’d out of the reach of these practical *Criticks*: notwithstanding whom, the speculator may repose himself as safely in his philosophical mansions as *Arachne* in the spacious canopies of a barn, or a wind-mill. It does not appear, however, that they know philosophical cobwebs, of a new fashion, from structures, calculated to stand for ages, and built of materials as durable, and lasting, as nature itself, and as old as the creation.

These gentlemen criticks tell us, in the plan of their *review*, “they will not presume to decide upon
upon

upon the merits of a work in an arbitrary sentence, unsupported by evidence." Nay they promise, "whenever they signify their disapprobation, to illustrate their censure with proper quotations, from which the reader may appeal to his own understanding." Now observe, reader, how they have kept their plan in view in the article before us. In one case, they are *firmly persuaded*, to the contrary of what the author has (*not*) said. In another, they wish they had *room* and *leisure* to examine, and refute, his impious doctrines. In a third, they hint, the author's dogmata are known to be *false* by *experience*. In a fourth, they are of a different opinion drawn from constant *observation*: but neither this experience nor observation are given us. And again (with the common cant of those who run over what they neither understand, nor can refute) they apprehend it would be *superfluous to comment* on things so extraordinary. These are all fine come-offs, pretty shuffling: and, if this might content the publick, it would be a very easy task to write a *critical review*.

It may be here objected indeed, that it is not the business of the criticks to refute every false doctrine, advanc'd by authors, but only to shew that such authors have advanced those doctrines. But is this objection consistent with what they, by their plan, have confessedly undertaken? and supposing it were, should not these *criticks*, when they had proved the matter of fact, stop there; and not go so far as to call doctrines *impious* and *immoral*, without giving, at the same time, their reasons for it. That the *criticks* should enter, however, a *little* into the
argu-

arguments is surely necessary ; to let us see they perfectly comprehend the author's design : which, without this, the reader cannot tell whether they do or no. For example, in the very case where the criticks are so *firmly persuaded*, as one might think, of something opposite to our author's sentiments, it is in reality what the author may be, for any thing he has said, as firmly persuaded of as they. In fact, the reviewers have accused the author, of having advanced opinions impious, mischievous and immoral ; which they have neither prov'd to be *really advanc'd*, in his work, nor to be either *immoral*, *mischievous* or *impious*.

We shall prove this by entering into particulars. To begin, however, with the dedication. This part of our author's work, the *criticks* are pleas'd to say, has some *humour* (there are readers who have mistaken it for something *better*) they judge him, nevertheless much to blame, for thinking " the present minister a proper object of ridicule and irony." Now, reader, it doth not seem to us the author thought any such thing : for, he plainly says

—— what private worth foe'er thy boast,
I not address thy *person* but thy *post*.

And as to what the *criticks* object farther, " that such a respectable character ought to suspend all general satire on the office he so worthily performs ;" we are of a different opinion ; and think that, by hinting how rarely the office of prime minister is worthily executed, we heighten the encomium on the personage who deservedly per-

performs it. And, perhaps, an indifferent reader may think the elogium, couch'd in the following lines, no bad compliment to the person of the minister, however ironical or severe, the author may be on his office: in which irony, as the dedication is addressed to the minister *for the time being*, there is certainly some propriety: for, take one time with another, most people will think we have rather *bad* ministers than *good* ones. The author, after having censured some preceding ministers and measures, and, telling us that during their operation, nevertheless, his muse was silent, says

Nay when the guardian *genii* of the land,
To save our desp'rate fortunes took in hand;
I sung them not; tho' crown'd by half the nation
With civick wreaths, from town and corporation.

In the two last lines the author plainly alludes to the custom of the *Romans*; who decreed civic crowns to those who saved the life of a citizen: which *crowns* are here metaphorically applied to the complimentary *freedoms*, lately offered by almost all the cities and corporations, throughout the kingdom, to Mess. P. and L. We think those honourable gentlemen, also, however *use* may have improved their taste for *incense*, have reason to be well enough content with being stil'd the *guardian genii* of *Great Britain*. But here, reader, seems to lie the grievance. If you will take the trouble to look over the critical reviews, for several months past, you will find that many an honest hearted *Englishman*, besides our author, has attempted to compliment Mr. P. and hath been heartily abused by these *criticks* for his pains.

It seems this is a task they take upon themselves ; and that they think it a kind of invasion of their property, for any other writer to attempt it. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ !* what reason the reviewers may have for their behaviour in this point we know not : for we do not conceive them to have the most exquisite judgment, or elegant turn, for *panegyrick*. At least, without an authoritative *patent*, from his majesty or his ministers, we are afraid they will meet with some difficulty, in securing to themselves an exclusive privilege, of complimenting one of the first characters in the nation. But to come to their strictures on the work itself.

The reviewers tell us, that the author, in his first epistle, “ launches out into severe invectives against priests of all religions ; invectives indiscriminately levelled at the *faith* as well as the *faithful* ; invectives that favour more of humour and caprice than of candour and true philosophy.” They do not, however, give us any instance or example of all, or indeed any thing of, this, from the work itself. For, in fact, reader, the skepticks and hereticks, of *all* kinds, are as severely treated as the priests of *any*. Nay, in order to prevent a misconstruction of such a nature as these criticks have put on the author’s words, he tells us plainly, in a note, that by *priests* he does not understand consistent, protestant divines, of the church of England ; but only *designing men*, who, under the specious pretences of church-authority, would keep mankind in darkness and ignorance. What shall we say then of the candour and attention of our criticks ? Is their conduct consistent with their promises that they will
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not "seek to wrest the sense, misinterpret the meaning or misquote the words of any author? It is plain they have done all this. Will they say they did not invidiously *seek* it? "You have not sought it, sirs! whence comes it then?" Will you say inattention, dullness and petulance "lay in your way, and you found them?" It is highly injurious to the author, (and so on a fair perusal any one may see who is not unwilling to put a favourable construction on his words) to say "that the *faith*[†] and *faithful* are indiscriminately levell'd at together." That the author has severely chastised dogmatical priests and designing mystery-mongers, instead of favouring of humour and caprice, is becoming him both as a *philosopher* and a christian: and surely none but those, whose interest it is to keep the world in ignorance, or who themselves love darkness better than light, would cast so injurious a reflection on the author for it. That his satire is a weapon of many edges, and those all keen, is no reason for our thinking he slashes away, like a *drawcansir*, at random; or that the hand, that wields it, is rul'd by a capricious and fantastical head.

Of the second epistle, the *criticks* give us, indeed, a sketch, by particularizing several doctrines, which no philosopher, or man of common sense enough to understand them, will dispute. This being done, however, they declaim in the manner following. "Here are many positions dangerous and plausible. Here, under the pretext of free inquiry, are arrows glanc'd at the
C mysteries

† The criticks are hereby call'd upon to produce any thing advanc'd against a saving faith, as laid down in the gospel.

mysteries of our holy religion. *Here* are artful attempts to sap the foundation of the *christian* faith; to infuse doubts and scruples into weak minds; to introduce an anarchy of scepticism and irreligion and particularly to depreciate the establish'd church." This is a very black and heavy charge. But may we ask, good now, what these *criticks* mean by their repeated word *here*? Do they mean that these flagitious attempts are contained in the doctrines they enumerate? if they do, it was needless for them to assert the tendency of such doctrines, if their tendency were obvious; and, if it were not, it was necessary the *criticks* should have demonstrated, when they so daringly asserted, it. But by the word *here*, it is probable they meant that the dangerous tendency lay in the manner, in which those doctrines were inculcated, and the attendant strokes of infidelity by which they were accompanied: of all which they give no specimen. And yet, surely, such a string of scandalous imputations might have been thought of consequence enough to require some little proof, by quotation or otherwise, that they were well grounded. But not a syllable. We must take the reviewers *ipse dixit* for it, or have recourse to the book itself; in which an impartial reader may look long enough before he will find any thing to accuse the author of worse than can, at the same time, be laid to the charge of either the great Mr. *Locke*, or the late bishop of *Clogher*, Dr. *South*, Dr. *Whitchcote*, Dr. *Jortin*, or some other divine of the established church. Unless, indeed, these terrible accusations be founded on the author's differing in his opinion of miracles from the ORTHODOX Mr. *Hume*, and on his offering the most plausible
and

and most consistent expedient, for supporting our belief in the veracity of real miracles, that we presume was ever proposed. That the philosopher (for so we will call him in spite of the criticks) does indeed expose the absurdities contained in that interpolated creed of *Athanasius*, we cannot deny: but in this, his arrows do not merely glance: they appear to have been fairly and openly pointed at a jargon of words; which he clearly demonstrates unintelligible: placing the supposition of any man's believing what he does not understand in so ridiculous a light, that no man, who dares to think and can think at all, can hesitate about the matter.

That our author does not believe all those heap of miracles, which lying jesuits or earlier impostors have maintain'd: that he does not believe also all the artful pretensions of designing hypocrites, or crazy fanaticks to the gifts of inspiration: this, we say, is a scepticism that does him honour both as a man of sense and a *christian*: nay we will venture to say such scepticism would be highly becoming in an *orthodox* member of the establish'd church. But here we will let the author speak for himself, and let the reader judge, whether the above imputations are justly thrown upon him or not.

Lorenzo, neither you, nor I,
 What God reveals can e'er deny.
 But here how needful to be wise
 To know where revelation lies!
 Art thou thyself inspir'd by heav'n?
 Tell me what outward proof is given.
 Dost thou intuitively view

What reason tells thee must be true ?
 No revelation here requir'd,
 How proves such truth thou art inspir'd ?
 For why inspir'd, if but to tell,
 What reason might have told as well ?
 As truth beholds thy mental eye
 What seems to common sense a lie,
 Thy proof imagination strong ?
 Here also may'st thou still be wrong.
 From heav'n if ever fir'd conceit,
 Brandy has also done the feat :
 Nay oft' th'infatuate of brain,
 Of heav'n's presum'd injunctions vain,
 Have madly broke its dread commands,
 And dipp'd in blood their murd'ring hands.
 If God or devil then inspire
 Of reason still we must inquire.
 And reason doubtless would reply,
 Heav'n never yet *reveal'd* a lie.

Now who can blame the author here for advising mankind to distrust the over-heated imaginations of themselves or others ? The criticks say he affirms, " that the criterion of science is to be neglected only in points indisputably and intelligibly reveal'd." This indefinite method of quoting is neither candid nor just. The author says, *in the search of truth or philosophical enquiry*, that criterion is only to be so neglected: telling us in his advertisement, " that he hath purposely avoided taking part with the divines of any sect or party; leaving it to the ingenuous of every persuasion to determine how far their private sentiments

timents may be supported by authorities, superior to those of philosophical investigation."

But should we suppose our author had said that we ought to confine our belief, even in *matters of faith*, to points intelligibly reveal'd? Who will say, on the contrary, that we ought to believe any one dogma whatever, that we ourselves cannot find intelligibly reveal'd in the scripture? Men would trust frequently to broken reeds who should build their faith on expositors and commentators. What would our *criticks* be at, here? Are they going to play the jesuit upon us; and preach up mother-church? Surely none but popish bigots will join with them, in thus accusing, of infidelity, an author; who, to prevent the freedom of his philosophy from being thus misconstrued, to the prejudice of religion, could close his arguments with the following lines.

In rev'rence, yet, we all must own
The pow'r and will of God unknown;
Confin'd not to the narrow bound
Of reason's most extensive round;
Active a thousand ways *beside*;
Beyond unknown how far and wide.
From gray experience, hence, conceal'd
The gifts of grace, to babes reveal'd;
From science hid that sacred fire
Heav'n's chosen servants doth inspire;
Who, highly favour'd from above,
Behold descend th' all-quick'ning dove,
Or cloven tongue; the spiritual boast
Of brethren in the Holy Ghost.

In the third epistle say the criticks “ the author explodes, as absurd, the supposition that *implicit* subjection to authority is necessary to the support of society, or the political happiness of mankind.” It is true he does ; and our *dissenting* criticks thus reply, “ for our parts, we are firmly persuaded that without subjection to authority no society can exist.” And pray what man of common understanding ever thought otherwise ? But is there is no difference between *subjection to authority* and *IMPLICIT subjection to authority* ? Do our criticks know the force of words ? or do they take our author for the *multinomial* doctor ; who dashes away, without the trouble of thinking, and gives you as many super-numerary words in a sentence as another author would do in a page ? But to be serious. An *implicit* subjection to authority, either ecclesiastical or civil, is not, we thank God, at present, and we hope never will be, the subjection of *Englishmen*. Ours is a *reasonable* subjection ; that of *free-men* and *protestants* and not the implicit one of *slaves* and *papists*. An *implicit* subjection to authority ! why did not the criticks go a little further and assert the divine right of kings ; or that of a parliament, without any king at all ? Let us suppose there was a law in being, whereby a man was required to do an act of inhumanity, or what his own conscience would not acquit him for doing ; is it a crime not to pay an implicit obedience to that law ? humane and conscientious people will say, no. Again, is it a crime for me not to do an unreasonable thing, because the law requires it ? reasonable people will say, no. And will our *criticks* presume to aver that whatever is passed into an act of parliament is, therefore, consistent with *reason, justice*
and

and *humanity*? It is reported that a certain gentleman once said, openly in parliament, that, tho' the whole legislative body of the kingdom should pass an act, in order to set a popish prince on the throne, he should yet think it his duty to oppose the execution of such an act. A saying worthy an Englishman, a man of sense and a patriot! We will not, however, pretend to say that, in a certain depravity of manners, no temporizing is to be admitted. In practice we think it reasonably may: but, how far it may be reasonable, humane, or conscientious to acquiesce in unreasonable, inhuman and unconscionable laws, is a point to be consider'd, under the article of time-serving ways and means, and wrong-headed political expedients; but must never enter into consideration, where *truth* and *philosophy* are concern'd. It was, in truth, a noble and just saying of the late bishop of *Clogher*, that "if men were not allow'd to declare their sentiments, in spite of establishments in church and state, truth would be soon banish'd the earth."

Will our *criticks* excuse themselves here by alleging they did not mean or say, *implicit subjection*? We answer it is what they ought to have said; for such they quote as the author's words; and it is plain such is his meaning. Nay, they ought to have said *implicit subjection, founded on ignorance and mere custom*: for such, and such only, is what our author censures.

Can *ignorance* be understood
As needful to the public good;
That free inquiry men decry;
And boast their salutary lie?

Or are they here by *habit* led,
 And innovation's tumult dread?
 So sacred held the stated rules
 Of *custom*, lawgiver to fools! &c.

What did the reviewers mean, therefore, by insinuating that the author would have every wrong-head at liberty to condemn the laws of his country? as if he had asserted the privilege of every factious deist, or crazy fanatick, to start up, without regard to decency or order, and turn reformer. Where will they find the least traces of such sentiments in his performance? This imputation is, therefore, extremely cruel and unjust; as it not only tends to prove the author a bad philosopher; but also a bad man, nay little better than a *traitor* to government, and an *enemy* to mankind.

And here we cannot but observe with what detestation those, who take the character of our author's works from the criticks, must needs look on both the work and the author. In their strictures on the *first* and *second* epistle, both are said to be written with the most impious and dangerous design: no less than that of undermining *christianity* itself and introducing an anarchy of *scepticism* and *irreligion*. The third, it is insinuated, is levelled against the peace and good order of society. So that the whole appears, already, to be a daring and insolent attempt on the tranquillity both of *church* and *state*. On this misrepresentation of our author's work, who is there, that hath either religion or honesty, and does not feel his indignation rise against it? Ought not a publication of so dangerous a nature (if such it be) to be burnt by the hands of the
 common

common hangman, instead of being recommended, as a work of *genius*, and the author complimented as a master of *diction* and *imagery*? And yet, on the other hand, if these things are not so, and the accusations, brought against the work and author, are proved false and groundless, what shall we say bad enough of those *criticks*, whose temerarious pens have thus dar'd, illiberally, to brand a man of genius with the most odious of characters? We forbear, indeed, to chastise them in the manner they deserve, in hopes of their becoming sensible of, and retracting, their rash and inconsiderate censures. We cannot help, however, addressing ourselves here immediately to these gentlemen; whose pretensions to *candour* and *circumspection* are so great, and their true claim to either so little. For shame! gentlemen *criticks*, are you really the persons “ whose characters and capacities have been universally approv'd and acknowledged by the publick?” And are we to look upon your account of our author's work, as a specimen of that *true spirit of criticism* you professedly set out, in your censorial undertaking, to revive? If you have thus treated a writer, whom you acknowledge a genius, what may we think you will say of us; who, in humble prose, and with no other view than to justify our friend against your injurious censures, take upon us to espouse his principles? You will say, perhaps, this remonstrance is the work of a prostituted hireling, paid by the author's bookseller to expose you: or, perhaps, such competent judges of stile, as you are, may add to the affronts already put on the author of the epistles, and lay this pamphlet also to his charge. But we care not, and, as to the re-

spected

spected author, we have reason to think he will heartily despise all such imputations as have no grounds to support them.

In their remarks on the *fourth* epistle ; which treats of the incomprehensibility of the divine nature, the *criticks* tell us, what indeed we knew by the author's advertisement, and what we think they might have known too, had they read that advertisement, as they pretend to have done. This is, gentle reader, that the author plainly *rejects*, as they are pleased to term it, all revelation. The performance is, indeed, purely *philosophical* ; and so the writer takes proper care to inform us ; and that he does not found his reasoning on proofs of scripture, but sets revelation entirely aside, in his present enquiries. How far he, or any other philosophical writer, is justifiable in doing this, or what is likely to be the tendency of such a method of disquisition, we shall consider by and by. In the mean time, however, what can we think of this remark of our *criticks* ? Doth it not favour of an " invidious " endeavour to wrest the sense of our author ?" If the reviewers think it a crime to indulge philosophical speculation, abstracted from scripture, why do they not tell us so, and join *Hutchinson* and master * *Kennedy* at once ? Why do they not, at the same time, accuse Sir *Isaac Newton* of heresy, for not founding his *Principia* on the *Pentateuch* ? Or why do they not accuse in the same man-

* This gentleman tells us " Sir *Isaac Newton* was a dupe, imposed on by wags ; one that listen'd to the suggestions of " a *demon*." We suppose he means that wicked, mathematical devil, yclept *Demonstration*, the descendant, according to serjeant *Kite's* logick, of the father of lies.

manner professor *Saunderson*, for neglecting to demonstrate the principles of *algebra*, or the mechanism of *sounds*, by quotations from the *Apocalypse*? For certainly this, with the assistance of such a genius as that of the reverend Mr. H——, or of Dr. St. Cl——, they might, very edifyingly, have done. In this epistle, the author, proceeding confessedly on rational principles only, tells us that our ideas of moral perfection cannot be consider'd as adequate to the perfections of deity: "a doctrine so big with mischief and impiety," say these *criticks* that —— what? "will they examine and refute it?"——No, gentle reader, that they wish they had *time* and *leisure* to do it. It is a pity, indeed, they had not. We should have bless'd ourselves, no doubt, at the excellent work they would have made of it. And yet, had they been so dispos'd, they might have shorten'd their long and useless quotations, to have made room for something of this kind.

But perhaps the *criticks* found the suppos'd infidelity of the author, in regard to revelation, on the following severe lines.

- "As jugglers, who, t'enhance deceit,
- "To sacred science give their cheat,
- "While, with the curtain, still they hide
- "The *slight of hand*, too closely eyed:
- "So fly *theologues* here impart
- "The *hocus pocus* of their art;
- "Holding religion's sacred veil,
- "Where *slights of understanding* fail."

Who is there, however, that will not see the author here does not object to the *sacred veil*,
or

or the *mystery*, of religion itself, but only to the use made of it by a parcel of metaphysical divines? Such were *Cudworth*, *Clarke*, and others; whose sophistical subtilties, doing outrage both to scripture and philosophy, led them blundering on, about the unintelligible nature of things, till they found they had no other way, to skreen themselves from the imputations of *fatalism*, than to silence ev'ry tongue with the voice of *mystery*: for as our author says

“ —When detected in her lie,
“ *Myst'ry's* the biter's arch reply.”

That elaborate, scientifick investigations are not necessary for our understanding the scriptures, and that *metaphysicks* and *divinity* are sciences which should be ever kept separate and distinct, is an opinion, we presume, neither new, unreasonable, nor uncommon.

Again, the philosopher is blam'd for erecting his altar, like the *Athenians*, to an *unknown god*; and is accus'd “ of sheltering himself from the charge of *atheism* by allowing a *first cause*.” This is not quite fair, good *criticks*. You might have said an *intelligent first cause*, “ from whom, “ and by whom, all things were made that are “ made.” If in the investigation of nature, also, you can discover the marks of goodness, benevolence, and the like, none will presume to deny them to be the effects of the will of God: but a philosopher can go no farther: we have, *by reason*, no knowledge of the actual connection, or dependance, of effect and cause. So that our science

science here fails us, and we are, as *philosophers*, totally at a stand. As theologists indeed and *christians*; if the one, eternal and true God condescends to approach nearer to us in the scriptures, and to speak to us in another language, by the energy and grace of his holy spirit; it is in the sacred writings; there, and there only, the moral attributes of the deity are to be sought for, and by them only to be defended; and not by the subtle reasonings of philosophy; by which we can never know God.

Here, by the way, also, we cannot but take notice of the great consistency of the authors of the critical review, at different times, with themselves. In their work for *February* 1757, they give an account of a small * extract of the epistles in question: in which account, they quote that very passage of our author, where he raises his philosophical altar to an unknown god, without making any reflection on its mischief and impiety; or indeed any other, except that of commending it, with some others, as extremely spirited, *just* and poetical. Nor let the reader suspect this *fourth* epistle to have receiv'd any material alteration, since it was first printed. It is, on the contrary, reprinted almost *verbatim* from the former publication: and surely, if it contain'd doctrines so big with mischief and impiety, it ought not, at that time, to have pass'd off with such encomiums: nor can it be imagin'd the extract, on the whole, would have escap'd the censure of even *protestant divines*, who professedly took on them to criticise it. And yet

* *Epistles to Lorenzo*, a few copies of which only were printed and distributed.

yet the reverend and learned professor *De Joncour*, of the *Hague*, in his *Bibliothèque angloise*, for *January* and *February* 1757, begins his account, of that extract, in the following words, *L'auteur de cette petite piece anonyme est poete et homme d'esprit. Il a aussi de connoissance, &c.* He then goes on to take some notice of that small performance, but says not a word about these doctrines, which, our criticks tell us, are so big with mischief and impiety. No, gentle reader, that learned divine and professor of philosophy, like a judicious reviewer, knew better. He knew it would be neither candid nor honest to examine a work professedly philosophical by the criterion of divinity.

In the *fifth* and *sixth* epistles, the author endeavours to shew that a state of perfect happiness is not attainable in the rags of mortality: in which opinion, whether it be false or true, he is not singular: Mr. *Hume* telling us, in plain terms, "that as to *happiness*, it is not to be "thought of." He blames also former writers for confounding, and explaining away, the meaning of *happiness*, under the names of *ease*, *content*, *pleasure*, &c. notwithstanding this, our *criticks* charge him with doing the like; tho' what he means, by happiness, is as plain as the dome of *St. Paul's*; and is that which all men, who make use of that word, must mean by it; viz. *some uninterrupted state of satisfaction or enjoyment, free from pain and disquietude.* Now the author asserts a state of mortality is not such a state: but that a continued sense of either pain or pleasure is inconsistent with human nature. The *criticks* pretend to be of a very different opinion.

But

But it is plain they do not, or will not, understand the author. In the *fifth* epistle, indeed, he enters not deeply into the argument; but brings a number of instances, from common life, to shew that no persons, of whatever degree, station, or capacity, actually possess a state of happiness; and to demonstrate, at the same time, the comparative nature of pleasure and pain: instances, the most exceptionable of which, these *criticks* were, some time ago, pleas'd to call *finely express'd, most descriptive, sensible and TRUE*.* And yet, at present, they say "in vain will our author produce exceptions to disprove a general rule, even if these exceptions are enforc'd with all the *energy of wit* and all the *graces of painting*." But, pray, who hath laid down the general rule these *criticks* hint at? Do they mean, by *general rules*, the wise *saws* of sententious decrepitude; or the gossiping adages of ridiculous old women? All the general rules, philosophers admit, are form'd on the greatest number of particular examples. It remains, therefore, for these objecting *criticks* to prove, they have in fact the majority on their own side; before they pretend to opinions founded on *general rules*. Their sentiments, say they, are drawn from constant *observation*. Whose? pray. Their own? Those of the author appear, also, to be founded on observation too. The reader will determine for himself, which appears to be the most accurate and judicious observer.

What do these *criticks* mean by modestly hinting, they know, from *experience*, that *religion* and *virtue* will confer *happiness*? We presume their

* See review for February 1757.

their experience is limited to this world : and, if so, let us assure them, from experience too, that neither religion nor virtue can secure mankind from the calamities incident to human nature. Is it not a *general rule* that we do *not go to Heav'n on a feather-bed* : and that the most religious and virtuous have their peculiar anxieties. Nay the *apostle* goes so far as to say that, with regard to this life, they *are of all men the most miserable*.

So gloomy oft a state of grace,
 So often hid our maker's face,
 So oft by Satan, and by sin,
 Sore buffeted the man within !

What say our criticks to this ? shall we prefer the evidence of their pretended experience to maxims both sacred and profane ? or shall we not prefer that of our author, back'd by the testimony of an apostle ? It may be objected, indeed, that the apostle's testimony would, in fact, prove too much, if made use of in support of the author's general system ; which, tho' it denies that religion and virtue confer happiness in this life, at the same time, however, denies that the religious and virtuous are more miserable than others. But, indeed, it is plain, the apostle speaks here in a general sense, as to the apparent happiness of mankind in possessing the good things of this life.

That a consciousness of having done well, and a sincere piety towards God, give solid satisfaction, and that men may *reap joy and comfort in the holy ghost*, no Christian will deny.
 But,

But, supposing these, or any other motives, should make men happy for a week, a month, a year, nay years together; this supposition does, by no means, disprove the author's argument: "that, in this life, we enjoy no pleasure, that is not, sooner or later, attended with an equal degree of pain."

That it is indisputable the reviewers do not understand the author, will appear further, from the following remark, on the beginning of the sixth epistle. "Our author avers, say they, that no abstract evil exists, because there are no defects in the general system of things." Now this, reader, is not true. Our author avers no such thing, for such reason. He denies, indeed, that abstract evil exists; but not for so insufficient a reason as that, because there are no defects in the general system of things. He appears to know very well that, this would be only to ring changes on the words *imperfection* and *evils*; which has been done often enough, and to as little purpose, already. His reasons for the non-existence of abstract evil are founded on the physical nature of things, dependant on the eternal, and unalterable, will of God: from whom cometh no evil.

If our *criticks* would take the trouble to read, and digest, the fifth and sixth epistles, they would find they do not, at present, understand them; but that they have look'd over the author's meaning. But, lest they should not find themselves dispos'd to do this, we will consider for them, that curious, and much controverted
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point, on which those epistles turn, viz. the existence of *good* and *evil*.

Rejecting the *Manichean* and many other as absurd systems, we conceive the difficulty of admitting, or denying, the abstract existence of evil lies here : first, in the apparent absurdity of denying the existence of evil, when mankind are daily liable to, and so severely feel, its effects : secondly, in that, if its existence be allow'd, the absurdity is as great to suppose it, to proceed from a supreme being, infinitely powerful and just.

To consider these points in a way purely philosophical, we are led to examine the premises, on which the suppos'd absurdity rests. As to the terms, the *existence* of *evil*, it must be remark'd, that both of them are *relative* and *indefinite*. In other words, we have no distinct and clear idea of *existence*, independent of some object existing ; nor of *evil*, abstracted from some kind of hurtful consequence, which is suppos'd to be the result of it ; that which is perceptible being what we say *exists* ; and that which gives pain what we call evil. For, as the author observes, if mankind had neither felt pain or pleasure, they would never, *by the light of nature*, have acquir'd the ideas of *good* and *ill*. The truth of which observation cannot be doubted by those, who know any thing of the manner, in which we acquire our various ideas.

Now, pain being nothing more than a disagreeable

agreeable sensation, or a *mode* * of perception, and perception itself the criterion of its existence; take away *perception* and you take away *pain*. What then is *perception*? How shall we define it, without calling in the idea of *duration*? That which does not *endure*, or *continue*, does not *exist*. Pain therefore must be felt during some certain time, or it does not exist. But pain is not a *thing* or *object* to be felt at all. It is only a *mode* of *feeling*, and as dependant on the object immediately felt as form and figure are on bodies. Supposing, now, we should perceive a body that, during the whole time of its existence, as such a body, should assume, alternately, a square and a round form; appearing as often, or as *long*, and as *much*, round as square, and *vicē versā*: Would you assert that body to be positively either round or square; or pretend its *rotundity* had any other than a mere relative existence; to wit, relative to the periods of time at which such body was round or square. Thus, tho' we are sensible we feel alternately pain and pleasure, yet, if, on the whole of human life, there be reason to think we are as often, or as long, and as much pleas'd as pain'd, what becomes of our criterion of the abstract existence of *evil*? The existence of that evil of which we are so positive is plainly relative. But, perhaps, this is all too *metaphysical* for our *criticks*. We would willingly have them understand us, if we could. In plain terms, then, we mean only to shew that, if human life, during its whole period, be as much

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* For pain is not any *thing* or *object* that we immediately perceive, but only a disagreeable *manner* in which *things* or *objects* are perceiv'd.

attended with pleasure as pain, we have no proof, from the light of nature, of the existence of abstract evil. And, if evil be merely relative, there is no absurdity in attributing its existence to the power and justice of the deity.

Sayst thou indeed “ if man confin’d
 “ To fill the place by Heav’n assign’d,
 “ But partially to rise, or fall,
 “ Why feels he misery, at all ? ”

Another question answers this.

What title have mankind to bliss ?

During thy life, if, man and boy,

Thy share of both thou may’st enjoy ;

If perfect rest the certain *mean*

Our pleasures and our pains between ;

Null’d the *momentum* of our pain ;

Who shall of *providence* complain ?

The query indeed still recurs ; whether this be really the case ? If, indeed, it be not so, and the pains of human life on a fair ballance be *greater* than the pleasures, the surplus must be consider’d as the real property of man, and, from the light of nature, *evil* will appear to have an abstract existence, in the nature of things ; and we see not how we can get off from attributing it to the deity ; how absurd and impious soever it be. For to say, with some divines, above quoted, that there is any inherent necessity in the nature of things, independant of the will of the creator, is, in our opinion, to subject God to some suppos’d superior power, and to become the most impious fatalists. Indeed, we, who look upon the nature
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of things to depend immediately on the will of God, think it a foolish thing to say, there is any thing God *cannot do*. There is nothing he cannot do, consistent with his doing or *acting* at all: for, if the nature of things be the effect of his will, to say he cannot make a thing *to be*, at the same time, what *it is not*, is saying no more than that the *will of God* is *immutable*.

From this consideration, there appears something very absurd in the notion, that any particular abstract *evils* (as those of imperfection are sometimes call'd) are necessary, or contribute, to the existence of abstract general *good*. For, on the above supposition, that the nature of things depends on the will of God, it cannot be suppos'd, that he converts things essentially evil, if such there were, into things essentially good. He would be no longer an unchangeable God if he did.

That things, providentially and relatively, *evil* may become, in the hands of providence and in time, relatively *good*, none will deny, though they must allow, at the same time, that whatever is *essentially* good or evil, *can be* no other than *it is*. The *triangular* superficies, of any *physical* body, may be converted into a *square* one: but, by no power, in Heav'n or on earth, can a *mathematical triangle* become a *mathematical square*; unless the nature of things, dependant on the immutable will of God, was mutable.

As to the point, whether the pains and pleasures of life are equal or not; we imagine, if all

the individuals of mankind were to give their opinions *honestly*, all together, at any one period of time, as to which they thought the greatest or the least, we should find, at casting up of votes, that they would be equally divided: unless, indeed, there should happen to be an *odd* man remaining: and in that case, it is probable he would be at a loss to give his casting vote.

If we judge, indeed, by the majority of writers, *evil* is the predominant. But, in this point, we should be careful of being misled by *pretences*. There are many who, with their lips, will tell ye, “there is nothing but misery in this world: that all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” But hear what their actions say; and you will find reason to disbelieve them; nay, to think the good things of this life are all they know and aspire after. *Maupertius*, *Bayle*, and many others, are of opinion that the pains *exceed* the pleasures of life: but these are *writers*, and their evidence the suspected one of the tongue. Mr. *Pope* has beautifully describ’d the several comforts and distresses, which attend the various conditions of human life: and seems to conclude all mankind equally happy.

Heav’n to mankind impartial we confess,
If all are equal in their happiness.

Now, if this may be the case with mankind in regard to each other, why may not the same method of reasoning prevail in respect to the general

neral lot of individuals,* so diversified at different periods of life? Why may we not as well suppose the pains of the individual compensated by his pleasures, as suppose all equally happy? Nay, without some such compensation, even the poet's other supposition is absurd; for, unless he means that a proper ballance between their several pains and pleasures be first respectively made, his reasoning is palpably false; as there can be no doubt that some men suffer much greater pains, and enjoy much greater pleasures, than others. Nor can we, with any reason, suppose them equally happy; unless their respective pains and pleasures be consider'd as compensating each other.

But that the pains and pleasures of human life are *unequal*, and that individuals may enjoy a life, in which happiness or misery has had the greatest share: this we say, will undoubtedly be supported by millions; who think their experience will justify their assertion.

Our author hath brought variety of examples, and rais'd a number of images, to prove the contrary; from his own observation and experience: the *criticks*, however, are unconvinc'd; and unconvinc'd they are likely to remain for us: as we cannot pretend to say any thing here equal to

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* The *criticks* may, perhaps, ask, "if it be not possible, "in the nature of things, for a man to *die* as well at any one "time as *another*:" and, if this be granted them, they will say, he may then die at a time when his portions of pain and pleasure have been unequal. But we will not allow the question, believing, with our author, in a *particular providence*, and that men do not live or die by mere accident.

what our author hath already said. We cannot, however, help remarking that, in judging of our pains and pleasures, we place the *mean*, or neutral, point by far too much on one side. We are not apt to place the simple enjoyment of health, and the bare necessities of life, to the account of pleasures; tho' certainly, in this case, there is a pleasure in the bare consciousness of our own existence, at least of our existence as *rational* creatures, that we very ungratefully neglect in loading the scale of misery with our complaints. Imaginary wants and distresses, indeed, all are ready to give up, as compensated; but how do we differ in our notion of what is imaginary? the wants of others are frequently imaginary; but unhappily, or rather *ridiculously*, our *own* are always *real*. *Poverty* and *sickness* are the two great evils which men are apt to think cannot, in this life, be compensated. Poverty may, perhaps, be too gently paraphras'd by calling it the *want of riches*: it may indeed be aggravated to the want of a competence, or the want of immediate necessities. And yet, it is certain, a bare *competence* to one man may be riches to a second; and the *want of necessities* to a third may be yet a competence to a fourth: unless indeed, by persons in the *want of necessities*, we mean such as actually suffer the pains of cold and hunger. In which case, it cannot be suppos'd they will esteem themselves possess'd of a competency. Those, who are really freezing or starving, must be consider'd in the same view as those, who are sick, or otherwise in pain. But we know that neither the pains of hunger, cold or sickness, can be borne beyond a certain *degree*; nor longer than a certain *time*, without intermission. We know,
also,

also, that all intervals of ease or gratification give pleasure, in proportion to the intenseness of the pain remitted, or the eagerness of our necessities. It has, indeed, been said, that the *transports* of recovery only prove the *intenseness* of the pain: but pray, tho' they do prove this, are they the less pleasing on that account? on the contrary, does not the intenseness of the pain prove too the pleasure of our transports? and are not they reciprocally the measure of each other? we are much mistaken if this be not the case.

As to mere poverty; where is mirth, vivacity, and good humour to be found, in so great a degree, as in the lowest classes of mankind? Indeed the severity some poor wretches feel is extreme: they have neither bread to eat, clothes to wear, bed to sleep on, nor home to shelter them from the insults of superior mortals or the inclemency of the seasons. How miserable and unhappy! What compensations have these? In the first place, such extreme wretchedness seldom perhaps lasts long: and, indeed, when it comes, it is generally the effect of our having enjoyed, in luxurious plenty, what we afterwards experience the want of. If this be not the case, you will find these wretches, in a great degree, insensible of their being in a state expos'd to so much severity. They do not pine in the *morning*, because they know not where to get a *dinner*; but wait till dinner-time comes before they listen to the cravings of appetite: nay, perhaps, appetite itself waits, in a great degree, obsequiously on their necessities. They do not lament in the *day-time* their want of a lodging at *night*; but complain not, till the evil hour of darkness and fatigue
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lays them under the necessity of making a bulk their pillow.

After all we can say, nevertheless, this point is perhaps not to be clearly determin'd : nor, indeed, does our author, dogmatically, *affirm* it. He proposes it only, in the way of argument, and gives his reasons for such a supposition. He says only,

*May not, at least, all human woe
Be ballanc'd with our joys below.*

But whether this be determinable or not, our existence, extending to another life, the reciprocal compensations may yet take place, within some limited time or system, agreeable to the relative nature of good and evil : for, to admit *evil* to have any abstract existence in the nature of things, necessarily involves us in that impious absurdity of making the deity the author of it.

The point being thus settled, with regard to *physical* evil, we come now to justify our author's principles, in regard to *moral*. And here the reviewers accuse him of having asserted " that no moral good can plead any abstract merit with the deity : " to which he must certainly plead guilty ; having asserted it indeed in bold terms. But surely our criticks are not in earnest, when they pretend to stand up in defence of the *christian* religion, by insinuating that moral good actually may plead abstract merit with the deity ! Do they know any thing of the tenets of the *protestant* esta-

establis'd church? Do they know that, according to the scriptures, we are to be justified by *faith* and not by *works*? That all our righteousness is as filthy rags? That, in the sight of God, no flesh living can be even *justified*; much less plead any abstract merit? That good works are merely the external signs of a gospel-faith; and that it is freely by grace we are saved? surely if they knew these things, and that this is the language of *christianity*, they would not have indulg'd their declamatory vein in the manner following. "If this be the case, away with all free-agency; away with all the honour and disgrace with which we distinguish the virtuous, and stigmatize the wicked. Wherefore should we reprove, correct and punish those effectual instruments of providence, we are pleased to term the guilty. Henceforth, let the *parricide*, who murdered his own child, be honour'd alike with the *patriot* who sav'd his country." All this is certainly very pretty and pathetick; and might merit our applause, should we meet with the like, in the forward declamations of a school-boy: but this *superficial* way of exclaiming against the consequence of doctrines is not refuting them. But we will shew the absurdity of these hackney'd reflections; that are as *mal-a-propos* as trite and superficial.

In the first place, supposing it only granted "that man can merit nothing, for his own good deeds, at the hands of deity, and that, on the other hand, moral evil is no defect in the designs of providence:" Why, pray are we to *away with all free agency*, in such a passion? The free agency of man, as an intelligent being, and not a mere mecha-

mechanical machine, is perfectly consistent with his relative qualities of *good* and *ill*; and as dependent also on the nature of things; to violate which, as our author observes, no man is at liberty: for indeed, we may as well deny man to be a free agent, because he cannot walk on the surface of the water, or “bestride the lazy-pacing clouds and sail upon the bosom of the air,” as to insinuate he has no free-agency, because he can no more disturb the order of the *moral* than he can of the *physical* world. For, as to any absolute free-agency in man, independent of the nature of things, it is both unphilosophical and impious to assert it; unless we are so bold as to assert our independency on the deity; and that it is not *through God we live, move and have our being*.

And why *away with the honour and disgrace, with which we distinguish the virtuous and stigmatize the wicked*? Is not a thief a thief, and a murderer a murderer; and both dangerous and detestable; whatever motive may have induced them to commit the crimes they are guilty of? In particular cases of apparent necessity, or provocation, we may indeed pity them, nay perhaps remit their due punishment. But this is all: the murderer and thief will ever be characters of abhorrence and detestation, so long as men continue to love their lives or their money. And it remains for the *criticks* to prove, even on the author's principles, that such our detestation of thieves and murderers is unjust.

Henceforth, say the *criticks* also, *let the parricide who murdered his own child be honour'd alike*
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with the patriot who saved his country. Ay, indeed, let him if he can. But there is no fear of this. Philosophers may discover the laws and hidden springs of nature; but they cannot, when they are found, reverse their design, or prevent their operation. The antipathy an honest mind has to villainy, or an humane temper to acts of cruelty, is as fix'd and certain as any physical, or mechanical, principle whatever. No, reader, the *parricide* never CAN be *honour'd* equally with the *patriot*, while the principles of reason and humanity are cultivated; and while mankind remain undebauch'd by the mischievous and diabolical notions of false religion: in which case, indeed, we may learn from history, that such parricides have not only been equally honoured with the most distinguish'd patriots, but have been celebrated as eminent examples of piety and virtue.

As to the reproof, correction and punishment of the guilty: Do these wise *criticks* know the intent and meaning of legal punishments? Do they know the *law* is not suppos'd to be vindictive, or to punish any man by way of revenge? the law punishes only *in terrorem*, though for having committed the most flagitious crimes imaginable. The law, as understood by civilians, is instituted purely for the publick good; and is not calculated to be the instrument of *vengeance*. This *belongeth not to man; it is the Lord's, and he will repay it*: and repay it he certainly does, in the ways of his *providence*; and agreeable to his eternal will, displayed in the immutable nature of things.

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We cannot dismiss this article without observing that the *criticks*, in their account of the *extract* before-mentioned, point out particularly the passage, where our author censures those superstitious bigots, who pretend to merit any thing at the hands of deity; which passage, at the same time, they remark, is *full of good sense and good argument*. They told us indeed, at the end of that * account, that “they consider’d the author, at that time, only as a *poet*, and addressing himself to our imaginations, and did not enter into his merit as a *philosopher*.” But, pray, is *good sense and good argument* essential to mere poetry?

They took upon them, further, to hint to the author their opinion of his capacity for the work he had undertaken; and that they should be glad to see it compleated. Now, surely our *criticks* did not discover that dangerous tendency in our author’s principles at that time, which they pretend to find now; or else, would they have given the poet such encouragement to pursue so *impious and immoral* a design?

But, on this head, they will, perhaps, say, they have chang’d their opinion. There may be some reason in this; as well as for their changing their opinion, with respect to our author’s work, again. And yet, if they are liable so frequently to such change, we cannot see any great dependence we can place on their judgment; nor, con-

* See Review for *Feb.* 1757, where, as another proof of the reading, attention and candour of our *criticks*, the reader will find the author charg’d with plagiarism, in taking two lines from a poem, in which they never existed.

consequently, what use their reviews are of to the world: so that, unless they have a more substantial reason, for continuing their criticisms, than the service of the publick, we may hope they will trouble the world with no more *critical reviews*.

In their remarks on the *seventh* epistle, which treats of moral principles, the criticks give us still further, and more flagrant, proofs of their inattention and misapprehension. For, after a very imperfect sketch of the general design of this epistle, they mistake the author so much, as to pretend he insinuates that “a man ought to be severe, ruggardly and hard-hearted, because by being humane and benevolent he may chance to relieve an unworthy object, or, in time, become bankrupt, to the prejudice of his creditors.” To this they add, by way of apostrophe, “is it possible that any man who hath not lost all sense of humanity, should reason in this manner?” And here, kind reader, give us leave to exclaim in our turn. Is it possible that any man, who has not lost all his five senses, should criticise in this manner? Is it possible any man of common understanding should so far mistake the author’s meaning? O that Dr. L——s, Mr. A. B——r, Dr. Sh——, or any other writer who might descend to call names, *were here, to set these* criticks down ——! *but, masters, remember they are ——; though it be not written down; yet forget not they are ——.*

There will need no illustration of the author’s sentiments to convince those, who have perused his performance, what is his true and obvious meaning; or how wide it is of this ridiculous and
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absurd misrepresentation. For the sake of others, we shall enter a little into the real state of the case: whereby the reader will evidently see, these *criticks* have taken their notions of the author's philosophy from bits and scraps, pick'd out here and there, without regard to what might precede or follow. For, setting aside the metaphysical truth of his principles, the system of morality he inculcates, through the whole epistle, is the most universal and generous that can probably enter into the heart of man. In the first place, he shews that persons, of the most gentle and kind dispositions, may, from a chain of unhappy circumstances, take abandon'd courses, and fall into vices, which others, of a less ingenuous and easy temper, escape; and that merely from their difference of disposition. He shews that excess of candour and good nature lays us open to the designing world, and often plunges us into meanness and vice; which men of hard hearts and suspicious heads never fall into: and that because their ill qualities prevent their being made the dupes of others; and, at the same time, secures them in a great degree from temptation.

Whence oft th' inflexible, the just,
 The man that never broke his trust,
 Indebted to inhuman art,
 Or killing coldness in his heart;
 While base and mean the quick-of-sense,
 From glowings of benevolence.

He ridicules our attributing so much merit to the virtue of such ill-natur'd unfeeling virtuous persons; while we so severely punish, and absurdly

furdly stigmatize, those unfortunate individuals, whose credulity and good nature have been their ruin. The reader of the epistles may, also, observe, that the instance of a ruin'd bankrupt serves to illustrate a direct opposite doctrine to that, which it is made to do in the *review*.

He proceeds, indeed, to shew that good-nature, or a soft disposition, is not *in itself truly virtuous*; because, the end of moral virtue being the good of mankind, mere good-nature frequently fails of that end. Do our *criticks* object against this criterion of virtue? let them point out a nobler. These *virtuous, happy* gentlemen may, perhaps, tell us the end of *their* virtue is to merit heaven. But in this case, why do they bring *humanity* into the question? Who is to allow them any *merit* when their virtue is *bought with a price*, and they are to be so extraordinarily well paid for it? Do they say they are virtuous out of love to God? If their *love to God* do not include their *love to man*; they may set up for *angels* and *seraphs*, if they will, but we will clear them of any imputation of *humanity*.

Our author asserts, indeed, that good-natured men ought not to give away that which is not their own to give, nor do good to one man knowingly to the prejudice of another. If the *criticks* will assert that they *may*, and act accordingly, those who share their benevolence may, perhaps, say something in praise of their *good-nature*; but the rest of mankind will have little

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to say about their *virtue* or their honesty. For, as our author justly observes, to virtue 'tis

——— requisite that first
The virtuous mind be strictly *just*.

It must be remark'd here, also, that the author is considering what is, in a strict philosophical sense, moral virtue. We will not pretend to deny that good nature has a more agreeable face than her ugly sister. But an agreeable medicine may prove a deadly poison, while a most abominable one is both anodyne and salutary. The philosopher enhances nothing at the expence of *truth*†, but sacrifices every other consideration to it; knowing that truth and virtue are inseparable companions. The author makes the former his immediate pursuit, because it is, of the two, the more easy to be discovered: for, however *truth* may be disguis'd, yet *virtue* is much more so.

To suppose that the mild, easy and benevolent passions of the mind are essentially virtuous, and the stern, turbulent and selfish essentially vicious (that is, in a strict philosophical sense, as immediately connected with moral good and evil) this supposition we say, our author does not admit; and we think with good reason: for we conceive

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† Dr. Brown, in a note to one of his poems, tells us, indeed, nothing can be *true* which contradicts *virtue*. A remark, however just in itself, that shews him no adept in philosophy: for, certainly that should be made the criterion which is the most obvious and definite. This is beginning at the wrong end of things, and serves to no end but to puzzle.

a number of physical causes, which no man can possibly avoid, may conspire to render individuals of different tempers. And, as the human *will* or design is essentially necessary to a man's being either morally virtuous or vicious, certain it is, that he must not be call'd virtuous or vicious, because he is of a good or bad temper. *Physically* virtuous and vicious indeed you may call him : as we ascribe *virtues* to *plants*, and call some animals *vicious* : but surely it would be unjust to call him *morally* so. If the author hath a hard heart and the criticks a soft one (which by the bye, may not be the case) there may be physical reasons for it; in which their respective choice had no part.

———— all are men,
 Condemn'd alike to groan,
 The *tender* for another's pain ;
 Th' *unfeeling* for his own.

GRAY.

Our author supposes, therefore, all the passions of the mind equally allied to virtue and vice : and that the worst dispositions or the hardest heart may, under the proper regulations of reason, act *virtuously*. Nay he supposes, that there are persons in life, whom extreme sensibility would prevent from acting virtuously, in their respective stations and characters ; which require men of the most daring and hardened dispositions. This sentiment is illustrated by the following allegory ; in the application of which, the author takes an opportunity of making an encomium on the hero of the age.

Is the small spring thy fav'rite theme,
 That trickles forth a shallow stream,
 In murmurs soft, a purling rill?
 How wilt thou do to drive the mill?
 How wilt thou make to ride, at large
 Thy timber, or thy loaded barge?
 As much as purling rills admir'd,
 The navigable stream's requir'd:
 The stream whose turbulence abides
 The roaring of the swelling tides;
 Alike whose raging bosom swells,
 And back the threat'ning tide repells.
 The hero, thus, the hardy brave
 How needful half the world to save!
 Like *Prussia's* king, through seas of blood
 Wading for threaten'd *Europe's* good!

Thus universal are the moral principles of the author, and so fix'd and determinate the basis, on which he makes virtue to rest. And as to his *humanity*, which is impeached by the criticks, what can demonstrate it more than that sincere pity which he recommends even for the vilest and abandon'd of mankind? as being truly sensible, however he detests their actions, that it is owing to nothing but the providential, and preventing, grace of God; that the best of us have not also fallen into a state of vice, equal to that of some others. If a principle of such universal charity as this offend our *humane criticks*, let them enjoy their spiritual pride, with as much pharisaical ostentation as they please; but don't let them offer

offer to paum it on the publick, as a concern for the interests of *religion* and *humanity*.

The author having shewn that to constitute any action virtuous, it is requisite a view should be had to the consequence of the action, as well as to the motive ; he comes next to recommend the study of our duty ; intimating that, as the consequence of every action determines its vice or virtue, i. e. as it affects the publick good, the truly moral man should endeavour to know the natural consequences of his actions ; that his good designs, or the designs arising in him from good dispositions, may not be frustrated. For, as he justly observes,

To virtue pitiful our claim
When, at a venture taking aim,
More by good luck, than sense or wit,
The mark of moral good we hit.

And here our author calls *wilful ignorance* guilt ; and asserts knowledge to be a fundamental and indispensable moral principle. A very extravagant assertion ! cry the criticks. But must not he, reader, be a very extravagant man who can think it so ? If it be our duty to do good and eschew evil, and a crime to neglect that duty ; surely the wilful ignorance of those means, whereby such good and evil are to be effected, must be a crime also.

Would not, however, an indifferent reader, confiding in the criticks' candour, think, by
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their manner of quoting the author's opinion, in such general terms, that he had maintain'd, it was a crime to be wilfully ignorant of any thing *indefinitely*? There are many things, doubtless, which it is no crime for a man to be wilfully ignorant of; nay, many it may be a merit in him to refuse to know. But while our divines declare it to be a sin for a man to be wilfully ignorant of the gospel, as the means of salvation; a moralist, by the same rule, may justly assert it to be a crime, for a man to be wilfully ignorant of his duty, as the means of virtue.

Having thus endeavour'd to expose the various misrepresentations of our criticks, we come, lastly, to consider how far our author may be to blame for publishing speculations, purely philosophical, on moral and theological subjects. And here, let us observe that the present age abounds with shallow thinkers and superficial reasoners on these subjects; numbers of which make shift to pick up so much argument as to fit them out for deists, skepticks and infidels: a set of men who believe, if they believe any thing, that *human* nature is hardly a degree better than the *brutal*; that we are sent into the world to eat, drink, propagate our species, die and be for ever forgotten. The number of these men are daily increasing, from the preposterous methods run into, on the other hand, by the fanaticks; who, if we may use the expression, are enough to make men sick of christianity. Of late years, also, we have seen, and daily see, numbers of these fanaticks holding forth in the churches, by law establish'd. So that we appear in some danger of being di-

divided into a nation of fanaticks and infidels.

As such a time as this, to offer a system of religion and morality, founded on the universal principles of humanity and the constitution of nature, our author might reasonably think would conduce to the publick good: especially if it were attended with any degree of literary merit, that might procure it to be read. To think of reclaiming either infidels or fanaticks by means of scripture, we are afraid would be a vain attempt: for bring what arguments you will, the one will see the truth inverted, and the other will shut his eyes and see no truth at all. Whatever is true, in the nature of things, never can affect the truth of divine revelation; since both come from the same God, immutable and perfectly consistent, at all times, and in all places, with himself.

That the author's work is not immediately calculated to support the doctrines of *christianity*, can be no reasonable objection to it; unless it had a contrary design. But neither the one nor the other is professedly his intention; because, by such a profess'd intention, he would have miss'd his aim: he must have espoused some particular party, and by that means have made enemies of all the rest. We must all, however, be sensible, that, to keep the deist and infidel within bounds, no method more proper can be taken than to shew him, on his own principles, that, carry scepticism ever so far, we shall never be able philosophically to deny intelligible and consistent *revelation*. And,

as to the fanaticks, nothing is wanting to make them men and christians, but to reduce them to reason. As to the *moral tendency* of such writings as our author's, in general, and his own in particular, it must be considered therefore, for what people and in what age they are published. The means, that will effect either a reformation, or depravation, of manners, are continually shifting, under the influence of the opinions and circumstances of the world. The expediency of exclusively teaching any doctrine, or recommending any motive, does not therefore follow, from the plainest proofs, that such doctrines and motives had a salutary effect at the time they were first inculcated or put in practice. The laws of *Solon* and *Lycurgus* are not those, which are justly esteemed to compose the best legislative constitution, now in the universe. Nay the advice of many a fox-hunting member of a country borough might be more useful, in the house of commons, than many of the wisest institutions of those excellent lawgivers. Such measures might, also, now, be treated as impotent, and such penalties be derided as ridiculous; which, a thousand years ago, or in a different nation, might awe mankind into the strictest discipline of religion and morals. The world, in the greater divisions of mankind, hath its periods of puerility and manhood, as well as the individuals of our species; and there is a time when the *bug-a-boo* and the *blind beggar* have the effect, which at others attends only on *capital* punishments. The absurdity, also, of not properly *timing* them, may prove as dangerous in fact, as it is ridiculous, in appearance.

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My lord *Orrery* supposes that, so much depends on the caprice and humours of mankind, in different ages; that even our best grounded conclusions in philosophy may hereafter be exploded; and that Sir *Isaac Newton*, and his notions, may, some time or other, be as little in fashion as *Aristotle* is at present. Dr. *Swift* was of the same opinion; but, as he was the worst philosopher perhaps that ever was so great a wit, we build nothing on his authority. And indeed, his lordship seems to carry the matter too far; unless, by *Newtonian* principles, he means only the *physical* ones of that great author. Yet to few of these did he pretend; his philosophical principles are mathematical, at the same time; and will last as long as truth and the frame of nature continues. The conclusions of *Aristotle* are indeed exploded; but are *Euclid's* so too? No. Nor ever will.

Certain, however, it is that all such doctrines and opinions, which do not admit of some kind of mathematical evidence, depend greatly on the capricious temper of the times. But, as it naturally happens, in the revolution of fashions, that many of the *old* ones revive in the *new*; why may not some antient mode of morality, if reviv'd by competent abilities or a leading hand, stand a good chance to *take*. We have seen very odd things, in similar circumstances, have a great *run*. A moralist, who wrote almost two thousand years ago, seems to hint at a good mode

mode in the morality of his time, when he says,

Oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore.

It is true, indeed, since the rays of christianity have enlighten'd the world, a considerable part of mankind have attach'd themselves to the practice of virtue, from other motives. The fear of *Hell* and hopes of *Heav'n* have formerly carried men great lengths this way; and we doubt not may, at present, carry others as far. But as the *Christian* system, with all its natural and super-natural advantages, is yet rejected by many, may it not be prudent to revive among *such*, that old fashion of *hating vice out of a love to virtue*? And what better method could our author take, as the world goes, to prepare the way for this fashion, than to convince us fairly, on the ballance of profit and loss, that we *get nothing* by being *vicious*, nor *lose any thing* by being *virtuous*. However detach'd, also, from *revelation*, must be the arguments our author was under the necessity of using, in such an attempt, they may nevertheless answer all the moral purposes of *christianity* itself: at least, among those, who have no other motive for rejecting that system than an affectation of peculiarity and paradox; an affectation to which are owing the principles of, the greater part of, the pretended free-thinkers of this age and nation.

Monf. de *Montesquieu* does *England* the honour, to call it a nation of philosophers. In the strict sense of the word, indeed, as men who *love*
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to use their reason, the generality of *Englishmen* may not be improperly term'd so : * nor can our author's work be condemn'd as injudiciously calculated for their improvement in such *times* as ours : times it were affectation to accuse universally of *ignorance*, however justly condemn'd, for a too general *superficiality* of knowledge.

It may, indeed, be queried whether philosophy can ever give what Lord *Shaftesbury* calls a *taste* for virtue to all those, who nevertheless fully understand the argument. Much has been said lately about the essential beauty of virtue and deformity of vice ; and, if our author be in the right, it is no wonder it has been said to so little purpose. He supposes that virtue and vice are only *relatively* beautiful or deform'd ; that vice may appear beautiful, seen thro' the medium of our *passions*, when it would appear deform'd thro' that of our *reason* ; and, *vice versa*, we pre-

* *Montesquieu*, who was, perhaps, the most accurate observer of men and manners that ever liv'd, had been in *England*, and had studied the people well. He had himself experienc'd and confess'd that the lowest class among us had *reason*, even in cases where it made against himself. Of this we have been told a droll instance. This *French* baron, being one day walking out with some friends, a fresh-colour'd country wench met them, of whom (presuming on his station, as he would have done in *France*) the *baron* took a kiss without ceremony. The girl return'd the freedom with as little, and, by a hearty slap in the face, set the *baron's* nose bleeding ; on which the company reproving her, she reply'd, *the gentleman took the kiss by force*, adding, *had he ask'd me for one I might have given it him*. The plea being interpreted to the baron, he could not help crying out, as he wip'd his bloody nose, *Elle a, pourtant, RAISON*.

presume virtue may appear ugly to our passions, when it appears beautiful to our reason. Certain it is, when the severity of virtue opposes the gratification of any passion, it must appear to our judgment, while influenc'd solely by that passion, as disagreeable and ugly. On this subject we cannot help making one quotation more from our author.

Through reason let a sensual eye
 Th' enchanting form of *vice* espy;
 Equivocal in make and face,
 Her left side doth her right disgrace.
 As form'd to give, and share, delight
 One blooming cheek doth hearts invite;
 While roguish loves in ambush lie,
 And dart their arrows from her eye.
 A polish'd arm, a taper side,
 Her thigh, that scarce her garments hide,
 Her snow-white leg, and foot, shod neat,
 The half of beauty's form compleat.
 But ah, the contrast side appears
 Worn out with care and grey with years;
 With wrinkled brow and squinting eye,
 Scowling most horribly awry;
 While hollow cheek and nostril maim'd,
 Notch'd ear, burnt hand, and thigh-bone lam'd,
 Display a wretch, from head to tail
 Diseas'd with many a desp'rate ail;
 A form, which, wrapt in squalid dress,
 Compleats the half of ugliness.

Be-

Behold the charmer. This is *vice*.^{*}
 Embrace her. Is thy stomach nice?
 Too often *passion*, single ey'd,
 Enamour'd with the fairer side,
 The monster clasps; 'till, turn'd her face,
 We, starting, fly her loath'd embrace;
 Thro' *reason*'s medium only shown
 Her real form, in tints her own.

The criticks may here object that our author admits, in this passage, the deformity which reason discovers in *vice* to be *real*: and, certainly, with respect to man, a compound of passion and reason, its relative is a real deformity, but this is a moral and not a physical deformity, and therefore exists not in *rerum natura*, nor is to be discover'd by mere physical taste, any more than the beauty of virtue is: our discovery of both depending not on either our passions or reason, separately; but, on a proper combination of both, more significantly express'd by the word, *Genius*.

In some men, it is true, we find a peculiar tendency in their passions toward *physical* beauties, as those of *sculpture*, *painting*, *music*, &c. In others you will find a peculiar tendency to the beauties of the *metaphysicks*, as those of *logick*, *mathematicks*, &c. In others, again, you will find the same tendency to the *moral* beauties as those of *polity*, *humanity*, &c. All these

* We are inform'd an ingenious foreigner has executed this picture on canvass, on which it makes a most striking contrast.

these beauties depend on some certain *harmonical disposition* of parts, in the respective objects esteem'd beautiful: and the tendency of mankind to the one or the other respectively, may be properly call'd *taste*. No propensity, however, to admire these beauties will enable us to discover them, where they do not immediately strike the *taste*. To do this is the work of reason; and the united efforts of *taste* and *reason* may be call'd * *genius*. Thence follows a very peculiar and curious conclusion, which is, that, as a physical genius, cannot be a bad physiologist (that is in theory), nor a metaphysical genius a bad logician or mathematician, so a moral genius cannot be a bad moralist or politician. And hence, if the *criticks*, or the reader, discover the marks of a *moral genius*, in our author's work, they must admit him to be a competent judge of the moral tendency of it.

In fact, to prove the danger of rational enquiry, and the immoral tendency of setting aside the scriptures in philosophical investigation; it is requir'd we should first prove, that benevolence, moderation, integrity, with those other virtues, which are the bonds and ornaments of civil society, are the striking characteristicks of the pretenders to christianity. It is requir'd that we prove Christians possess these distinguishing virtues *exclusively*,

* In this respect, perhaps, Mr. *Hogarth* appears to us, from his *analysis of beauty*, to be the greatest genius of all painters. For it must be remark'd, we here speak only of *theoretical* and not *practical* genius. And indeed we query whether the word *practical* can be apply'd to *genius* at all. Mere imitation does not require true genius.

freely, or, at least, in a degree superior to the rest of mankind. Could Dr. *Leland*, or any other worthy and learned champion in the christian cause, produce proof of a point of this importance; could they silence the blood that cries out so loud against the zealots, who have occasionally offer'd up hecatombs of human sacrifices, to the God of *mercy* and *loving kindness*; nay could they, even on the authority of their reverend brethren, the ordinaries of *Newgate*, prove the *want of faith* to have brought one in a thousand to the *gallows*: such proof, we say, would be a more valid objection to the freedom of philosophical enquiry, than all our elaborate disquisitions, founded on the distant and obscure evidences of antiquity. But while such proofs cannot be brought; while a *zeal for the faith* is the distinguishing characteristick of a christian; and while even the history of christianity itself presents so melancholy a picture of complicated robbery, murder and ingratitude; surely men may be permitted to take other means, while not inconsistent with the religious views of that system, to improve our understandings; without being censur'd, as promoters of vice and immorality, or condemn'd as enemies to mankind.

As to the tendency of denying it to be our duty, to pay implicit subjection to the *church*, any more than to the *state*; we presume our author's doctrine needs no defence. While the rod of power remain'd in the hands of the church, and implicit obedience was the criterion both of the laity's judgment and morals; reverend dialecticians might indeed safely flourish away with their
scraps

scraps of *Latin*; and call the rest of mankind *rogues* and *blockheads*, as they pleas'd; without being mortified by a reply. But, at present, when, in ev'ry parish throughout the kingdom, may possibly be found a man as learned as the curate, or vicar; the laity will entertain some opinion of their own understandings; and that even, in spite of the more dogmatical *Hebrew*, to which the clergy now apply, as their last resource, to support the authority of their own *ipse dixit*, against the daring encroachments of *common sense*.

Men of weak capacities, women and children, may probably be actuated, by vain threats and empty promises, to the practices of morality; but is not their situation a state of servility, unworthy of rational creatures? Will it be said the world is still in a state of *puerility*? Admit it be so. Is it not the business of philosophy, to make it wiser, as it grows older? Are most children so dull that they *cannot* be led by reason, but must be driven by peremptory commands? Patience: but is this a reason that those who *can*, should be denied the benefit of rational instruction? Is this a reason that those, who may be *led*, should yet be *driven*; merely to gratify the insolence, or indulge the magisterial pride, of the *driver*?

Again, there is certainly a practical absurdity, in supposing the doctrine of future rewards and punishments more effectual to moral purposes, than that, which assures us virtue and vice meet their respective rewards in this life: since hourly experience teaches us what preference, men of
all

all ranks and opinions, give to their *present* concerns, when clashing with the *future*. Will it be urg'd that, by this doctrine, men are depriv'd of *hope*; their best supporter under the trials and calamities of this life, and their best comforter under the apprehensions of approaching death? and that, for this reason, however justifiable our arguments, it is neither acting the wise, nor the honest, part to inculcate such notions. Give us leave, however, to say, that, by a doctrine which declares all stations and degrees of life to be equally happy, on the whole; and that a just distribution of rewards and punishments takes place even in this life: by such a doctrine, we say, men are not depriv'd of any reasonable, well-grounded *hope*. Our author hath shewn how compatible the views of the virtuous mind are to a future state of happiness, abstracted from the false and presumptuous idea of our own merit.

We cannot deny that even imaginary and ill-grounded hopes may support men, under the distress of poverty, sickness and the like; or that mankind may, thereby, be induc'd to pay attention to that useful lesson, of patience and resignation to the will of their creator. But can such hopes be more effectual to that end than a rational conviction, that all situations of life are alike happy; and that, according to the constant and natural order of things, all our misfortunes must, and will, be attended, sooner or later, with a reciprocal degree of pleasure and satisfaction.

Will it be urg'd that this doctrine, taking away the fear of future punishments, will encourage *immorality*? How! will any one fear punishment more at a distance than when at hand? Doth the thief dread *Hell* so much as the *gallows*? Is not the libertine more afraid of *disease* than the *devil*? Doth not even the religious hypocrite fear detection *here* more than *hereafter*? Nay may we not seriously ask, whether devout christians, in general, do not, in fact, feel more restraint from their being under the eye of the world, than under that of God. Daily experience, we fear, will determine more than is necessary for us here. Can, then, any motive whatever bid fairer, to restrain the immoralities of mankind, than a rational conviction, that the inordinate gratification of our passions will certainly disappoint our expectations, in the enjoyment; or, in proportion to the intemperate sallies of pleasure, mortify us with distaste, regret and repentance? Surely not! No, reader; were men once fully convinc'd of such a truth, we might trust their morality to the dictates of their own *conscience*; whose voice would not be silenc'd by the idle observance of mere religious forms, ceremonious confessions and absurd penance. Nothing, in such a case, would do to atone, for past offences, but their utmost endeavours in the way of retaliation: nor would any sufficient excuse offer itself to serve us for the future. Nothing less than true repentance and a real amendment of life would, in this case, satisfy an accusing conscience.

Thus

Thus having cursorily consider'd the strictures of our criticks, the justice of the author's arguments and the tendency of his work in general, we shall detain the reader only to make a trifling remark or two, for the use of the criticks, and to return the parting compliment paid to our author. For we must confess, tho' we cannot see any just notion they have of our author's philosophy, yet we admire their peculiar propriety of stile, and aptness of expression. His philosophy they do not *approve*. Extremely well said! for how should any man be able to *approve* what he plainly does not *understand*? Again they own their *admiration* of his genius for *poetry* and *metaphysicks*. Now, *admiration*, says Dr. Tillotson, is that pleasure we enjoy "when we discover a great deal in an object, which we understand to be excellent: and yet see and know not how much *more beyond that*, which our understandings *cannot reach and comprehend at all*." This seems to have been exactly the case with our *criticks*; of whom we take our leave with assuring them, how loath we are to descend so low as to call names, tho' even by craft, as we have done in the title page, or as in the following line of *Pope*; which, however, the peculiar circumstances of the case will justify our quoting, in return for their many misrepresentations of our author; in which we find, of a truth,

There's nothing blackens like the ink of fools.

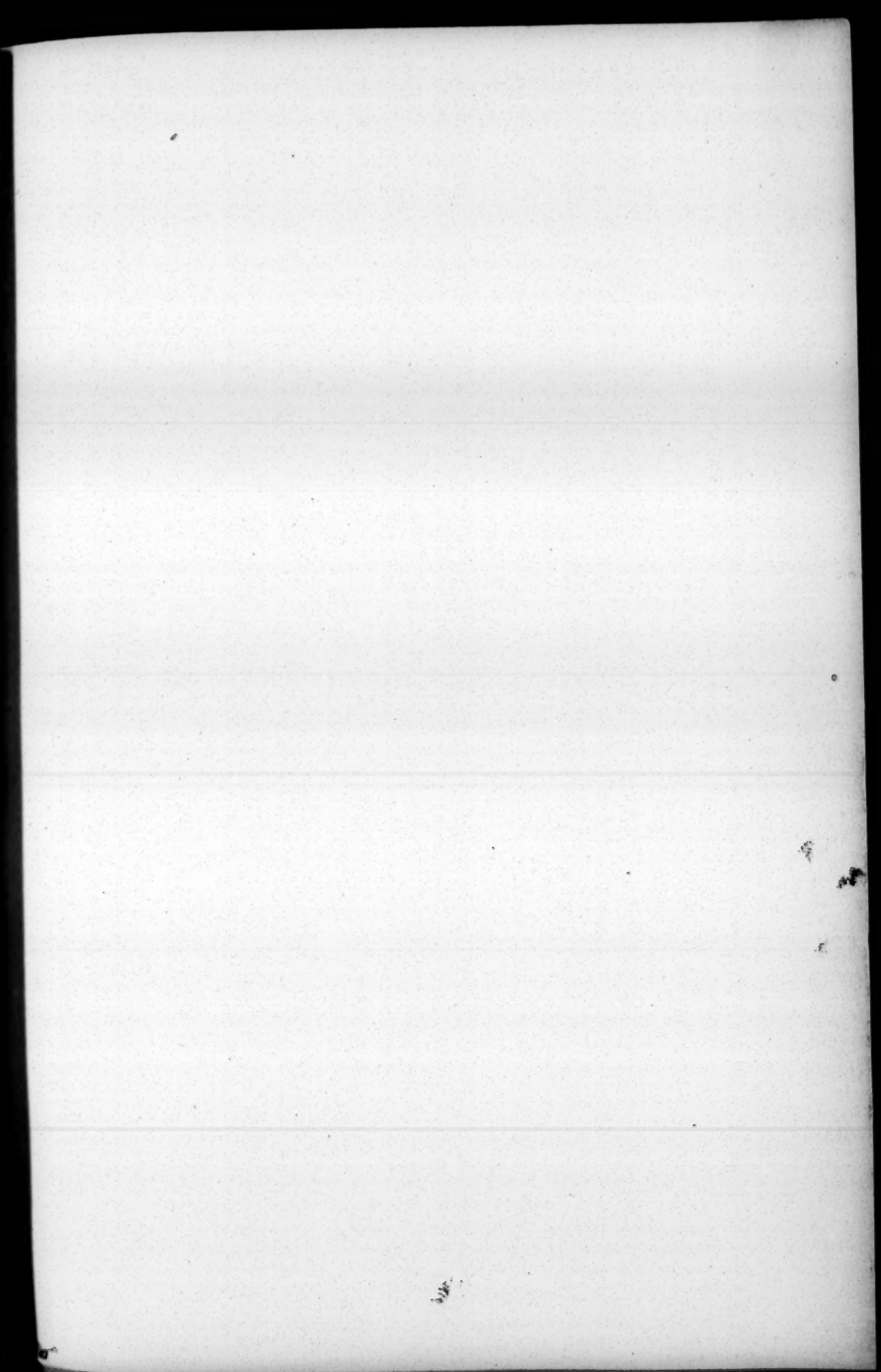
The reader, however, will do well to take notice that, no reflection, cast on these criticks,

is level'd at any particular person or persons : for we do not know an individual concern'd in their review. But, in circumstances wherein men appear to have laid aside good sense, candour and even common understanding, we certainly have a right to treat them as *fools* : whatever they may be, when they put on their considering *cap*, and throw away *that of folly*, with its *bells*.

Indeed, on the whole, the reader will easily see that, were we not amicably dispos'd toward these criticks, and, did we not make great allowance for them, as periodical writers confin'd to time and space, we have had a very fair occasion, and undeniable reason, to treat them with a severity that should made them remember giving such gross and unjustifiable provocation. These reviewers may, indeed, safely cut their jokes on pamphleteering poetasters, half-witted politicians and quack doctors; but, let our lenity be a warning to them, for the future, how they cast unmerited abuse on those, who may be capable of resenting an injury, at the same weapons, and in the manner, it is given.

THE END.

The reader, however, will do well to take notice that, no fiction, or any other such



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